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## STUDIES IN THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL

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### IV

#### ANCIENT JEWISH EXEGESIS AND MODERN CRITICISM.

THE services of the Jews to Biblical Studies are incalculable. Not only have they preserved the original Hebrew text of the Bible and furnished it with valuable critical apparatus; but they have also kept alive the practical knowledge of the Hebrew language which has enabled us to obtain a general understanding of the sacred text. Further, the Jews have also created, and brought to a high degree of perfection, two sciences which are indispensable for the study of the Bible, viz. the sciences of Hebrew philology and of Biblical exegesis. Modern scholarship has, indeed, widened the boundaries of these sciences, and rendered them more exact. Nevertheless in their fundamentals these sciences remain to-day practically in the condition to which they had attained in the works of the Jewish commentators and philologists of the Middle Ages. Only in one department of exegesis can modern scholarship claim to have made an original contribution of great value, viz. in the department of textual criticism. This contribution consists in the discovery and use of the Ancient Versions, and the consequent freedom in handling the text which the modern exegete has acquired from the study of

the Versions. However, it must be confessed that this acquisition has not proved altogether an unmixed blessing. Freedom from the fetters of the Massorah has in some cases degenerated into licence, with the result that some scholars have torn themselves away from their Massoretic moorings, and have eventually become lost in the eddies and quicksands of subjective conjecture and unrestrained hypothesis.

In view of these facts it is surprising to note the scant respect paid by modern non-Jewish scholars to ancient Jewish exegesis. These scholars rightly feel bound in honour to cite by name predecessors of whose labours they make use in their works. But although so much of their exegesis goes back to Jewish sources, yet one rarely finds in their writings an acknowledgment of this fact. In the long string of authorities usually cited in modern standard commentaries the names of the old Jewish masters of Biblical science are, as a rule, conspicuous by their absence. The student thus inevitably acquires the impression that Biblical science is only a creation of yesterday, and the monopoly of Protestant Christianity. And when Jewish authorities are mentioned it is often only to dismiss them with a sneer at their 'Rabbinic conceits'. Even so just and generous a scholar as the late Professor Driver could bring himself to cite 'the Jews' with a contemptuous smile (see his note on 1 Sam. 18. 21). 'The Jews' in this particular case happen to be none other than the great R. David Kimḥi, the original fountain-head of Hebrew learning in the Protestant Church, who is reproduced by Prof. Driver in his very next note, as in numerous other passages in his admirable work, without, however, the least acknowledgment.

The outstanding characteristic of Jewish exegesis is its fidelity to the Massoretic tradition. This fidelity did not, however, degenerate into blind faith, into a slavish adherence to the traditional text even when it proved to be in conflict with reason or truth. Jewish commentators often allowed themselves to depart from the Massorah and the authority of tradition. They did not, indeed, venture actually to introduce changes into the received text. This would have been a dangerous proceeding before the universal diffusion through the printing press of the authoritative standard text of the Massorah. Their deviations from the traditional text are usually expressed by such mild euphemisms as *מקרא מסורס*, *מקרא קצר*, *יחיר*, *חסר*, &c. But we must nevertheless recognize and acknowledge that, whether these pious and reverent exegetes realized it or not, such explanations do in fact constitute practically a repudiation of the infallibility of the Massorah, and an assertion of the right of independent personal judgement in textual questions. It is a striking testimony to the honesty, the robust sanity, and the acuteness of Jewish exegesis that in numerous cases these simple-minded, old-world scholars anticipated the emendations of modern critics, and unknowingly divined the variant readings given in the Ancient Versions. I will give in the following pages a list, by no means exhaustive, of such cases to be found in the Books of Samuel.<sup>45</sup>

I 1. 1. The proposal of some moderns to point הרמתים as הרמתים 'the Ramathites' was already made by Ralbag, who remarks : או יהיה . . . הרמתים כמו הרמתים אשר נקוד חירק תחת התי"ו . . . והרצון בזה שהוא היה מן האנשים היושבים ברמה.

The moderns connect צוף with צופים 9. 1. So also

<sup>45</sup> Numerous other examples are to be found in the earlier articles of this Series.

R. Isaiah in his commentary printed in the Rabbinic Bible, Warsaw, 1862.

5. The Vulgate renders אַפִּים—*tristis*, evidently connecting it with אָף = כַּעַס. This agrees with the interpretation of R. Joseph Kimḥi cited in his son's commentary. Cf. also the various interpretations given in *Pesikṭa Rabbati*, ed. Friedmann, 182 a, and *Midrash Samuel*, ed. Buber, *ad loc.*

11. The addition in LXX: καὶ οἶνον καὶ μέθυσμα οὐ πίνεται agrees with the opinion of R. Nehorai, *Mishnah Nazir*, IX, 5, who holds that Samuel was a Nazirite like Samson; cf. Judges 13. 3 a, b; Num. 6. 3 a. Likewise Ben Sira calls Samuel בְּנֵי־וָאָה, 46. 13.

20. Gesenius's interpretation of the name שְׁמוּאֵל, adopted by most moderns (cf. Driver's *Notes*<sup>2</sup>, 18) is already found in Rashi *ad loc.* So Ibn Ezra, Exod. 18. 3: שְׁמוּאֵל . . . מְנוּרַח שְׁמוֹ אֶל וְקִרְאָתוֹ אִמּוֹ בִּשְׁם אֵל כִּי הוּא נָתַן לָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר שְׁאַלָהּ, וְכו'. Cf. also Abrabanel *ad loc.*: . . . שְׁמוּאֵל הוּא שְׁמוֹ אֵל כִּי כָל הַדְּבָרִים: הַאֱלֹקִים יִקְרְאוּ בִּשְׁם ה'ק'ב'ה'.

2. 10. The pointing by Budde of יִרְעֵם as יִרְעֵם was already anticipated by some ancient commentators cited by R. Tanḥum Yerushalmi *ad loc.* (ed. Haarbruecker, Leipzig, 1846).

33. וְלִדְיָב = וְלִאֲדִיב is pointed by most moderns וְלִאֲדִיב. This was already suggested by R. Jonah Ibn Janah in his *Book of Roots* (Hebrew ed. Bacher, 13). So perhaps also Targum וְלִאֲפָחָה; cf. Onkelos on מְדִיבוֹת נֶפֶשׁ = מְדִיבוֹת נֶפֶשׁ, Lev. 26. 16.

4. 18. מִפְּרָקָתוֹ is rendered by LXX: ὁ νῶτος αὐτοῦ. Similarly R. Jonah, שְׁרָרָתוֹ (*op. cit.*, 414). So also R. Tanḥum.

5. 2. With the comments of the moderns on the placing by the Philistines of the Ark in Dagon's temple, cf. *Midrash*

ר' יוחנן אמר כבודו אמרו יבוא אלוה וישרה אצל אלוה. *Samuel*: ורשב"ל אומר . . . אמרו זה נצוח זה נצוח יבוא נצוח וישתעבד לנצוח.

7. 16. LXX rightly paraphrase המקומות by τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις; cf. Driver's note (p. 66). So Estori ha-Parḥi in his כפתור ופרח (ed. A. M. Luncz, Jerusalem, 1897, p. 298), remarks: שמואל בחסירותו היה מבקר חמיר מקומות שהיתה בהם קדושה.

12. 15. Kimḥi and Tanḥum recognized that ובמלככם is intended for ובאבותיכם, as in LXX. They endeavour to explain our text by the supposition that אב is here a title of the king.

22. The Vulgate's interpretation of הואיל—*iuravit* is also given by Rashi, who compares ויואל, 14. 25.

13. 1. Tanḥum already suggested that some numeral had fallen out after בן.

6. That by חוהים some subterranean hiding-place is meant (= חורים) was already noticed by R. Jonah, who remarks (*op. cit.*, 145): לפי הענין במערות והדומה להם.

12. The precise meaning of the phrase חלה פנים (cf. the *Oxford Gesenius*, 318) was already indicated in the remark of *Midrash Rabba*, Exod. 32. 11; ויחל משה עשה את המר מתוק.

14. 3. The identity of אחיה with אחימלך was already noticed by R. Isaiah, who remarks on 21. 2: הוא אחיה בן הוא אחימלך, which must of course be corrected as follows: הוא אחיה בן אחיטוב הוא אחימלך הכתוב וכו'.

18. The reading הג' ארון הא' for הגישה האפור, cited by Aptowitzer (*Das Schriftwort*, I, 48) from ברייתא דמלאכת ברית, VI, seems to rest on an error derived from 23. 9. Cf. the latest edition of the *Baraita* by M. Friedmann, Vienna, 1908, p. 44 end.

45. The ancient Rabbis already took ויפרו in a literal sense, as contrasted with the paraphrase favoured by Rashi

and others. Cf. *Midrash Samuel*: אמר ר' אליעזר נתנו משקלו: זהב ופדאורו.

15. 4. The identity of טלאים (ב) with טלם (Joshua 15. 24) is already suggested by R. Isaiah; cf. also Kimḥi.

5. Kimḥi's explanation of וירב as being a contraction of ויארב (cf. also *Miklol*, ed. Rittenberg, 85 b) agrees with the rendering of LXX: καὶ ἐνῆδρευσεν.

22. Ralbag declares the waw in ותרפים to be otiose as in ואיה, Gen. 36. 24; and in ורכב, Ps. 76. 7. He regards און as a construct noun dependent on תרפים as its genitive, parallel to חטאת קסם. This agrees with the rendering of Symmachus, ἡ ἀνομία τῶν εἰδώλων, following which most moderns read עון תרפים.

17. 18. The explanation of ערבתם as 'a token of their welfare' (cf. Driver's note) is already found in *Midrash Samuel*: דונם דירהון. Cf. also *Babli Shabbat* 56 a.

39. LXX renders ויאל—καὶ ἐκοπίασεν = וילא. Similarly R. Tanḥum: 'Meo iudicio inversum est e לאה quod legimus Gen. 19. 11.'

40. The omission of the *copula* in ובילקוט was already suggested by R. Isaiah: הו"ו יתרה.

52. The reading by LXX of נח for גיא is also advocated by R. Tanḥum.

19. 11. Kimḥi and Ralbag explain לשמרו ולהמיתו substantially like LXX, though they do not declare the copula to be otiose. Cf. Ralbag: לשמרו שלא יצא משם כדי שיוכלו להביא אותו אליו בבקר להמיתו על ידי אחר מעבדיו.

22. Raba in *Babli Zebahim* 54 b sees in ברמה a homiletical allusion to the Temple: שהיו יושבין ברמה ועוסקין: בנח"ו של עולם. He thus connects נח"ו with נוי 'beauty,' not with נוח 'habitation,' as stated by Aptowitz, *op. cit.*, II, 40.

20. 25. R. Isaiah explains ויקם יהונתן as follows: קם יהונתן:

מצד אביו וישב לפניו ששם היה מושבו. וכך כתיב ויטל שאול . . . ודרך המטיל מטיל לפניו. This agrees with the rendering of LXX: *καὶ προέφθασεν* [αὐ]τὸν *Ἰωναθάν*, 'Jonathan was in front of him' = 'ויקדם יה'. See Driver's note.

21. 6. Cf. Aptowitzer, *op. cit.*, II, 44, for the existence in ancient Rabbinic citations of a reading כַּתְמַל for כְּתַמַּל.

22. 4. R. Isaiah identifies the מצורה of this verse with מצפה of ver. 3. This agrees with the reading of the Peshitta adopted by many moderns. The same commentator remarks on ver. 3: וסמך עליהם מפני רוח שהיתה מואביה.

23. The emendation of the moderns, נפש . . . נפש, for נפשך . . . נפש, was already anticipated by Kīmḥi, who remarks: ויש לפרשו נפשי יבקש מי שיבקש את נפשך.

24. 11. Ralbag explains ואמר: אמר לבי תחלה. This agrees with the rendering of the Vulgate, 'et cogitavi'. R. Isaiah supplies עיני as subject to ותחם. So also Kīmḥi in *Miklol*, 52 a. This agrees with the rendering of the Vulgate: 'sed pepercit tibi oculus meus'. Cf. also the comment in *Babli Berakot* 62 b.

14. The emendation of הקרמני for הקרמני is already suggested by R. Tanḥum, who compares it with עמי = עמים, 2 Sam, 22. 44.

25. 3. Targum's explanation of כלבו 'a Kalebite' is also given in *Midrash Samuel*, *ad. loc.*, and in *Yerushalmi Sanhedrin*, II, 3, where the reading is כלובי as in 1 Chron. 2. 9; cf. Aptowitzer, *op. cit.*, II, 51. The interpretation of LXX, *καυικός*, is also found in Ralbag and R. Tanḥum. The former observes: ר"ל שלרוב אכזריותו ה[י]ת[ה] תכונתו כתכונת הכלבים ששונאים בני מינם וינבחו להם בבואם ולא יניחום לאכול מהנמצא בבית ואע"פ שלא ירע ממאכלם דבר.

6. On לחי R. Isaiah remarks: נעלם האלף ופתרוננו לאחי. This agrees with the Vulgate: 'fratribus meis'.



11. The interpretation of מימי as ייני given by LXX is also found in Midrash Samuel : כל מקום שנאמר : אמר ר' איבו כל מקום שנאמר : מיים יין הוא. So also R. Jonah in *Rikmah* (ed. Goldberg, 175). Cf. also Aptowitzer, I., 58.

14. The emendation of ויעט for ויבעט is already found in R. Tanhum.

34. R. Jonah (cited in *Miklol*, 106b) already suggested that ותבאתי was an error for ותבאי.

26. 6. On the question why Abishai and his brothers are always designated by the name of their mother Zeruah, and not by the name of their father, cf. the Responsum of R. Hai in תשובות הגאונים, No. 12 (Lyck, 1864), and also Kimhi in 2 Sam. 3. 39.

28. 3. The omission of the *copula* in ובעירו is also suggested by R. Isaiah : חוי"ז יתר. But if so ברמה should have followed בעירו as in 2 Sam. 15. 12; Judges 8. 27. As a matter of fact such a reading is given by Aptowitzer, I, 60 from an ancient Rabbinic citation.

31. 3. The transposition of אנשים before המורים was already proposed by R. Isaiah, who remarks : מקרא מסורס הוא : אנשים המורים בקשת.

With the rendering of LXX and Vulgate of ויחל cf. the comment of the Massorah, לישן חולי.

II 1. 1. R. Isaiah proposes to omit the article in העמלק : הה"א יתירה, as is done by LXX and Vulgate.

9. The rendering by Aquila of ὁ σφραγίζων (cf. Driver's note) may be compared with the explanation of R. Jonah (*Book of Roots*, 495), who also connects it with the root שבץ in Exod. 28. 39, which he interprets as רקמה וציור, i.e. embroidery work of loophole formations. He adds in explanation of our passage : תפשני העיור רצוני לומר [הרקמה] שהקיפוהו אנשי המלחמה : וסבבוהו.

19. R. Isaiah says: **הצבי ישראל מקרא מסורם הוא ישראל**: שהיית קל כצבי ועתה נפלת חלל. This agrees partly with the rendering of the Peshiṭta and many moderns.

21. **הרים שבגלבע** is paraphrased by Rashi: **הרי בגלבע** exactly as LXX, B. R. Isaiah, on the other hand, says: **כמו הרי הגלבע** which agrees with Targum, LXX, L, and Vulgate.

The two rival interpretations by the moderns of **בלי משיח** are both found in our commentators. Rashi and Ralbag refer it to the shield, citing Isa. 21. 5. R. Isaiah refers it to Saul himself: **שאל נחלש כאילו לא היה שאל**: משוח בשמן המשחה שמשחו שמואל ולא עמדה לו משיחתו להנצל. So Vulgate: 'quasi non esset unctus oleo'.<sup>46</sup> Ḳimḥi offers the choice of both these interpretations.

24. The moderns seek in **ערנים** some article of dress, proposing to read with LXX **עריים**, or **סרינים**. It is interesting to note that R. Isaiah explains **ערנים** to be equal to **ענדים** by metathesis, viz.; bands, sashes: **על ענדים כמו ענדים**; cf. also **מערנות**, 1 Sam. 15. 32; Job 38. 31. An ancient Rabbinic reading **ערי** for **ערנים** is cited by Aptowitzer, III, 6.

2. 4. On **אנשי יבש**, &c., Ḳimḥi remarks: **[לאמר]** או הוא הפוך, אשר אנשי יבש קברו, which agrees with LXX.

6. **גמול הטובה הזאת** is explained by Rashi: **תחת הטובה הזאת**. This agrees with the modern emendation **ה' תחת הטובה הזאת**.

24. Ḳimḥi explains the name **אמה** by the remark **אולי היתה אמת המים בצד הגבעה**. This agrees with Theodotion's rendering *ὑδαγωγός*, Vulgate *aquae ductus*.

3. 3. The connexion of **כלב** with **כלב**, i.e. with Nabal (cf.

<sup>46</sup> This improbable interpretation has recently been revived by Prof. E. Barnes in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. XVI, 396. His explanation of **הצבי** (ver. 19) as a vocative is already found in Ḳimḥi, R. Tanḥum, &c.

Peshiṭta), is emphasized in the Midrash cited in *Yalkuṭ*, Rashi, and Ḳimḥi. This is also the view of Kaspi (אדני כסף), ed. Last, I, 31: נקרא כן דרך צחות זכר לנבל שהיה כלבי. Cf. also *Babli Berakot* 4a: לא כלל שמו אלא דניאל שמו.

5. The conceit of Thenius and Klostermann that by עגלה is meant Michal is already found in *Babli Sanhedrin*, 21a.

13. On לפני R. Isaiah remarks: לשון כפול הוא שהיה כי אם לפני Cf. Driver's note. לפני הביאך

18. R. Isaiah comments on הושיע: הושיע ופירושו: נחלק האלף בהא ופירושו: הושיע, exactly like the Versions and some MSS. Cf. also *Miklol*, 31 b, and Aptowitzer, III, 9.

5. 21. In contrast to 1 Chron. 14. 12, Targum, and most Jewish commentators, and in agreement with the moderns, the ancient Rabbis explain וישאם in the literal sense, *Babli 'Abodah zarah* 41a; cf. Ḳimḥi. So also Kaspi, *op. cit.*, 33.

7. 11. On ויז' יתיר R. Isaiah comments: שלא יוסיפו בני עולה לענותו כמו שעשו מן היום אשר צויתי שופטים שבין שופט יוסיפו בני עולה לענותו כמו שעשו מן היום אשר צויתי שופטים שבין שופט. This agrees with the reading of the LXX, Vulgate, and the moderns. Cf. also our note on this passage in this REVIEW, vol. X, p. 225.

8. 7. Our commentators are divided on the exact meaning of שלטי. R. Jonah says (*Book of Roots*, 518) מין ממיני המגנים. So Ibn Ezra and Ḳimḥi. But Rashi says: הם אשפתות שנותנים בהם החצים, comparing with Jer. 51. 11. So R. Isaiah. This agrees with the rendering of Symmachus here and of LXX in Ezek. 27. 11.

16. With the modern interpretation of מזכיר cf. Rashi's comment: מזכיר איזה דין בא לפניו ראשון לפוסקו ראשון.

18. The modern explanation of כרחי ופלתי was antici-

pated by R. Jonah, who says (*op. cit.*, 231): פִּירְשׁוּ בּוּ בְעִלִּי [חֲצִים וּקְלָעִים וְאִינָם אֲצִלִּי אֵלָא] שְׁתֵּי מִשְׁפָּחוֹת שְׂאִינָם מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל and he refers to 1 Sam. 30. 14, 16; Zeph. 2. 5; Ezek. 25. 16, adding וְהִקְרֹב שֶׁהָיוּ לוֹ בְּחִילוֹ אֲנָשִׁים מִשְׁתֵּי הַמִּשְׁפָּחוֹת הָאֵלֶּה כִּמוֹ אֲתִי הִנְתִּי וְאֲנִשִּׁי.

10. 7. R. Isaiah comments: ה"א של הצבא יתרה. This agrees with Targum, LXX, L, and Vulgate; cf. 1 Chron. 20. 8; also Aptowitzer, III, 29. Kimḥi explains הצבא as in opposition to הגבורים, comparing with העם המלחמה, Joshua 8. 11, and then adds: או פִּי' הצבא והגבורים. This is the view of most moderns.

12. 21. בעבור הילד כשהיה is explained by Kimḥi: חי צמח. So LXX and Vulgate. R. Jonah, however, remarks (*op. cit.*, 352) בעוד (בעבור) הוא במקום בעוד, which agrees with Targum, LXX, L, and the moderns.

30. מלכּם was already explained by the ancient Rabbis (*Babli 'Abodah zarah* 44 a) as being identical with Milkom the god of the Ammonites; cf. also Rashi, and Aptowitzer, III, 36.

13. 2. Kimḥi, following the accents, refers בתולה היא backwards. Rashi, on the other hand, makes the phrase point forwards: כי מפני שהיא בתולה היתה צנועה בבית ואינה יוצאה לחוץ לפיכך ויפלא וגו'. This is also the view of the moderns. Kaspi, however, combines the two interpretations: זה סבה פועלת חשרת למה שלפניו ולמה שלאחריו (*op. cit.*, 36).

14. 10. Kimḥi would point והבאתי, as the moderns do: היה לו לאמר . . . והבאתי בחירק התי"ו כי לנקבה הוא מדבר.

26. The ancient Rabbis already saw a religious significance in Absalom's shearing of his hair; cf. *Babli Nazir* 4 b: רבי אומר אבשלום נזיר עולם היה; cf. also Kimḥi and Ralbag.

15. 12. Kimḥi proposes to insert ויקח before את אח'.

19. R. Isaiah explains למקומך : במקום מ"ם : בא הנה הלמ"ד במקום מ"ם : למקומך, as is read by most Versions and the moderns.

34. R. Isaiah remarks : מקרא מסורס הוא אני אהיה עבדך ; and further : הו"ו של ואני הראשון והאחרון יתיר. Similarly Kimḥi and most moderns.

16. 12. The emendation בעניי for בעניי is also suggested by Menahem ben Saruḡ ; cf. Aptowitzer, III, 50.

17. 28. The repetition of קליא is thus explained in *Babli 'Abodah zarah* 38 b : the first consisted of parched corn and the second of parched pulse ; cf. also our commentators. Similarly Vulgate translates the first by *polenta*, and the second *frixum cicer*.

19. 43. נשאת is explained by R. Jonah (*op. cit.*, 322), Rashi and others as a substantive on the analogy of מלאת (Cant. 5. 12 ; cf. Kimḥi). This agrees with the rendering of the Versions. R. Jonah offers also another explanation, viz. that the form is an infinitive with the addition of the final ה on the analogy of verbs ל"ה and pointed irregularly like נאץ in 12. 14. Similarly some moderns take the form as an infinitive, emending it, however, into נשא.

20. 4. Ralbag and R. Isaiah already connect שלשת ימים with clause b ; cf. Driver's note.

6. Rashi explains והציל עצמו מעינינו : והציל עינינו. Similarly Vulgate : 'et effugiat nos'.

8. Kaspi (*op. cit.*, 41) comments on והוא יצא : הכל רמו : והוא יצא, להחרב כלומר והחרב יצא[ה] מן תערה exactly as LXX. Cf. also our note *ad loc.* in this REVIEW, vol. X, p. 234.

14. Both Ralbag and R. Isaiah connect וכל הברים with what follows. The former identifies הברים with the inhabitants of בארות בנימין.

21. 4. R. Isaiah remarks : מקרא מסורס הוא להמית איש בישראל. So LXX, L, and Vulgate.

6. The ancient Rabbis already thought it strange that the Gibeonites should have styled Saul בחיר ה'. Cf. *Babli Berakot* 12 b, and also Rashi and *Kimḥi* here.

14. The reading of the Vulgate בצלע for בצלע is also found in Rabbinic authorities, cf. Aptowitzer, III, 70.

16. הרפה is explained by R. Jonah (*op. cit.*, 484) and *Kimḥi* as equal to הרפאים = הרפא; cf. Targum, and 1 Chron. 20. 4 (Ketib). Contrast *Babli Soṭah* 42 b, *Sanhedrin* 95 a. R. Isaiah seeks to combine the two interpretations.

*Kimḥi* and R. Isaiah explain חרשה as חרב חרשה as in the Vulgate: *ense novo*.<sup>47</sup>

23. 5. R. Tanḥum already takes חפץ to be equivalent to חפצי: *Scribendum erat חפצי*, sed *yod* omissum est quemadmodum factum est in עזי וחמרת יה, *Exod.* 15. 2.

11. לחיה is explained by R. Isaiah as שם מקום, which agrees with the modern interpretation.

24. 22. For the meaning of מורגים, cf. *Babli 'Abodah zarah* 24 b; *Zebahim* 116 b and Rashi, *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Kimḥi* adds the interesting remark borrowed from mediaeval chivalry: שאותו היום נתחנך ללבוש בלי המלחמה ודרך המהונכים לעשות נצחון 'That day he was initiated to carry arms, and it is the custom of the initiated to perform an act of triumph and heroism on the day of their initiation, in order to acquire fame; therefore "he said to smite David"'.

## V

## THE CHRONOLOGY OF DAVID'S REIGN.

THE reign of David was crowded with important events both at home and abroad. But the record of these events presented to us in the Second Book of Samuel is not always arranged in strict chronological order. This circumstance may be ascribed to various causes—first, the deficiency in the ancient historian of what we regard to-day as the proper historical perspective; secondly, the composite character of the history, which is responsible for the appearance of comparatively early events at the very end of the book (chaps. 21, 24); thirdly, the summary character of some of its chapters (e.g. chaps. 5, 8), which necessitated the grouping together of events which are related or similar in their nature, though quite unconnected in respect of the time of their occurrence. The result is that a good deal of uncertainty prevails among writers on the period as to the correct sequence of the events of David's reign. We may, therefore, be permitted to make here a fresh attempt at a chronological scheme of David's reign in accordance with some of the results obtained in our previous STUDIES.

The length of David's reign is given as 40 years (2 Sam. 5. 4; 1 Kings 2. 11). That this number is meant to be taken literally and not merely as an indefinite round number like the number 40 years in the Book of Judges, is proved by the distribution of parts of the number between David's residence at Hebron and in Jerusalem. 7 years

and 6 months were spent at Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. This gives us really a total of  $40\frac{1}{2}$  years, but it is possible that the reign in Jerusalem lasted some months less than 33 years. It may be noted that LXX, L actually alters the text in 2 Sam. 5. 5, and writes 32 years and 6 months in place of 33 years of MT. In 1 Kings 2. 11, however, the residence at Hebron is given as only 7 years. 2 years of David's reign at Hebron synchronized with the 2 years' reign of Ishbosheth at Mahanaim (2 Sam. 2. 10). This would leave us with an interregnum in Israel of 5 years; cf. *Seder 'Olam*, ch. XIII: נמצאת מלכות ישראל בטלה חמש שנים. So also Kimḥi in 2 Sam. 2. 11. It is, however, difficult to believe that fully 5 years had elapsed before Israel resolved to offer the vacant throne to David, seeing that they had already empowered Abner to make that offer on their behalf during the life-time of Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 3. 19). Another alternative is, as Ralbag remarks (see his full discussion on 2 Sam. 2. 10), that a period of 5 years had passed between the death of Saul and the appointment of Ishbosheth. But while it may be conceded that some time may have elapsed before the Israelites had so far recovered from the great disaster at Gilboa as to re-establish their monarchy, it is very improbable that the interregnum between Saul and Ishbosheth could have lasted for fully five years. David would certainly have taken full advantage of such a prolonged state of anarchy in Israel to extend immediately his rule over the tribes adjoining the Judean territory. Again, some critics seek to overcome the difficulty by denying the accuracy of the statement that the reign of Ishbosheth lasted only 2 years. The reign of Saul is also given as 2 years (1 Sam. 13. 1), which is certainly an error. In fact, 2 Sam. 3. 1 would



seem to favour the assumption that Ishbosheth reigned for a longer period than 2 years. But, on the other hand, we have no right to set aside lightly a positive statement in the text, unless forced thereto by irrefutable proofs, as in the case of Saul's reign.

It seems to the present writer that the true solution of the difficulty is to be found in the assumption that David's removal to Jerusalem took place some years after his anointment as king over all Israel. A little consideration will show that this view is the only one which accords with the circumstances of the situation. It is expressly stated by the historian (2 Sam. 5. 17 a), and the statement is accepted by most moderns, that the Philistine War broke out immediately on David's anointment as king over all Israel. This war was very protracted and characterized by much heavy fighting, which at first went against David (cf. 2 Sam. 5. 17 b; 22. 15-21; 23. 9-17). It is evident that some time, probably two years, must have elapsed before David found himself strong enough and secure enough from further Philistine attacks to lay siege to and to capture the Jebusite stronghold. We therefore conclude that the reign of Ishbosheth really lasted no more than 2 years, and that the throne of Israel passed over to David shortly, say within one year, after the murder of Saul's son, but that David continued to reside at Hebron for some years longer, until he had gained a decisive victory over the Philistines, which enabled him to capture Jerusalem and to make it his capital. It is true that the wording of 2 Sam. 2. 11; 5. 5 seems to imply that David's rule at Hebron was confined to Judah alone. But we must not interpret this wording too literally. It may be that the expressions על בית יהודה, על יהודה are to be

connected with מלך rather than with the number of years following them. The historian wishes to emphasize the fact that the rule at Hebron was, at least originally, over Judah alone, as contrasted with the rule in Jerusalem, which was over the whole united nation. Again, it may be that a year elapsed between the death of Saul and the proclamation of Ishbosheth, and another year between the death of Ishbosheth and the anointment of David over all Israel. Thus the major portion of David's rule at Hebron—4 years out of  $7\frac{1}{2}$ —was over Judah alone. Moreover, the best part of the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years which followed the anointment as king over Israel was spent in fighting with the Philistines and the Jebusites. During those dark days David was forced to evacuate Hebron and to seek refuge in the cave of Adullam in the borderland of Judah (cf. 2 Sam. 5. 17 b, with 23. 13, 14). All the fighting was carried on in Judah and, it would seem, by the men of Judah, with little or no help from the Israelitish tribes, as is proved by the list of heroes in 23. 8 ff. which contains almost exclusively the names of men hailing from the South (see our remarks in this REVIEW, vol. X, p. 235, note on 23. 32). Thus, though David had been anointed king over all Israel some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years before he removed from Hebron, yet his rule during these  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years must have been practically confined to Judah, as stated in 2. 11; 5. 5.

We may now enumerate in their proper sequence the principal events of the first period of David's reign, during which he acquired and consolidated his rule over all Israel. His anointment as king over Judah immediately after the death of Saul was followed by the proclamation of Ishbosheth at Mahanaim. About two years later came the death of Abner at the hands of Joab, and soon

afterwards the murder of Ishbosheth. Then came David's anointment as king over all Israel, followed by the outbreak of the first Philistine war (5. 17-21). After the decisive defeat of the Philistines at Ba'al Perazim came the capture of Jerusalem and David's removal thither from Hebron (see this REVIEW, vol. IX, p. 46, § 91). This was followed by the embassy of Hiram and the erection of David's royal residence (5. 11). Then came the second Philistine war, with the second great victory in the Vale of Rephaim, which was followed by the final subjugation of this formidable foe (5. 22 ff.; 8. 1). Next came the removal of the Ark to Jerusalem (6. 1 ff., cf. this REVIEW, *loc. cit.*, p. 47), by which the new capital became established as the great religious centre of the nation. The concluding event of this period is the incident described in chap. 7, which occurred in a time of profound peace and repose after years of hard toil and fighting (7. 1). As shown in a previous Study (see this REVIEW, *ibid.*, § 92) the expression מַלְאִי אִיבִי must not be taken with strict literalness, since Nathan's prophecy was delivered before the birth of Solomon which it predicted, i.e. before the outbreak of the Ammonite war (cf. 7. 10a, 11a β, 12-13).

We next get another closely connected series of events of which the first was the searching out by David of Mephibosheth and his settlement in Jerusalem (chap. 9). We may plausibly assume that David would not have instituted his search for Saul's descendants before he had firmly established himself on the throne of Israel; and on the other hand that he would not have delayed the performance of this act of piety to the memory of his friend Jonathan longer than was absolutely necessary. The settlement of Mephibosheth in Jerusalem must therefore

have taken place after the subjugation of the Philistines, and also after the establishment of the Ark in Jerusalem, and probably also after Nathan's prophecy (chap. 7), but before the opening of the period of expansion through foreign conquests. Now we learn from 4. 4 that Mephibosheth was five years old at the death of Saul. But at his coming to Jerusalem he had already a young son (9. 12). Therefore he must have been at least twenty years old when he came to Jerusalem. It follows that the coming of Mephibosheth to David's court must have taken place not earlier than the fifteenth year of David's reign.

The next important event we reckon to have been the great Famine recorded in 21. 1-14. This calamity must have occurred after David's discovery of Mephibosheth (cf. 21. 7, and see this REVIEW, *ibid.*, §§ 100, 109, pp. 54, 62), but before Mephibosheth had fallen into disgrace during Absalom's Rebellion (16. 1-4; 19. 30). For David would not have been so anxious to save Mephibosheth after he had accepted Ziba's calumny. But it is evident from 24. 1a (see Driver's note and cf. this REVIEW, *ibid.*, § 109, p. 63) that the Famine was followed shortly afterwards by the Census. Now, from the fact that the Census was conducted by Joab and the captains of the host (24. 2, 4) and that it was confined to men of military age (ver. 9b), it is evident that the Census was undertaken for military purposes. It seems that the Census really marked the opening of the period of political expansion and foreign conquest which occupied the middle part of David's reign. David had now secured the safety of the kingdom by the subjugation of its only formidable enemy, the Philistines. He had consolidated his rule over Israel by making Jerusalem the political and religious capital of the united nation. His ambition and the adventurous

spirit both of himself and his warriors would not, however, be satisfied with these achievements. His mind was bent upon a policy of aggression and conquest abroad. In order to carry through such a policy it was necessary to ascertain the military strength of the nation, for which purpose the Census was undertaken. Thus the Census was the preparation for a war abroad. But against whom was this war to be directed? Not against the Philistines, for their power had already been completely broken. Nor against the Ammonites and their allies, for the Ammonite war was sprung upon David quite unexpectedly, and was provoked by the Ammonites themselves. Nor, finally, against Edom, for the Edomite war seems to have been the last of David's foreign wars. We are therefore led to the conclusion that the war for which the Census was a preparation was to be directed against the Moabites, who, as a matter of fact, follow immediately upon the Philistines in the list of conquered nations given in chap. 8. We do not know the origin of the Moabite war. But from the severity with which it was conducted it is evident that David's purpose was the total and permanent subjection of Moab to the Israelitish rule, a purpose which he accomplished most successfully (see this REVIEW, *ibid.*, p. 51, § 95). It is plausible to assume that it was this conduct of David towards their neighbours and kinsmen which inspired the Ammonites with fear and suspicion of David's secret designs against their country, and impelled them to adopt a policy of hostility and provocation towards Israel. They felt, no doubt, that David's professed friendship for their king would not prevent him from attacking their country when he found it convenient to do so, any more than his obligations to the royal house of Moab

prevented him from destroying the Moabites and their independence.

We thus conclude that the Census was the preliminary of David's foreign wars. Some writers, however, who accept the reading of LXX, L in 24. 6: *הַחֲתִים קָרְשָׁה* for the corrupt *תַּחֲתִים חֲרָשִׁי*, have seen in the description of the itinerary of the enumerators (24, 5-7) a proof that the Census took place after the expansion of the boundaries of the kingdom through the Armenian and trans-Jordanic conquests. But it is evident from 24. 9 that the Census was confined strictly to Israel and Judah and did not include any of the conquered nations. The reading of LXX, L in ver. 6 is altogether improbable (see Driver's note *ad loc.*). For apart from the extreme distance of the Hittite Kadesh, it may be asked why the itinerary should have included that city of the Hittites and none of the border cities of the other subject nations such as the Philistines, Edomites, or Ammonites. As a matter of fact, all the other places enumerated in the itinerary marked the boundaries of purely Israelitish territory, including, of course, also the original inhabitants of Canaan, who had by that time become more or less absorbed into the Israelitish stock.

We may now endeavour to fix the dates of these events. We have seen above that the coming of Mephibosheth to Jerusalem, which preceded the Famine, took place not before the fifteenth year of David's reign. The Famine may have begun immediately afterwards and lasted till the year 18. Allowing for a short period of recuperation between the Famine and the Census, we may fix the latter event at the year 20 in David's reign. The war with Moab may have taken place in the year 21, and this was followed by the great Ammonite War. The exact date of this latter war

will depend on the age which we assign to Solomon at his accession to the throne of his father. According to *Seder 'Olam*, chap. XIV (reproduced by Rashi and *Kimḥi* on 1 Kings 3. 7)<sup>48</sup> Solomon was twelve years old at the death of his father. But this figure is obtained by a purely artificial calculation. Josephus (*Antiq.*, VIII, 7, 8) implies that he was fourteen years old. But it is incredible that a child, however precocious, would have been capable at such a tender age of the wisdom and circumspection, the firmness and resoluteness which Solomon displayed immediately after the death of his father in dealing with his powerful opponents (1 Kings 2. 23-46). Note also that his father at his death calls him *אִישׁ חָכָם*. On the other hand, the age of twenty years assigned to him by Abrabanel on 1 Kings 3. 7 is much too high. Solomon calls himself some time after his accession *נֶעַר קָטָן* (*ibid.*). He plays a purely passive rôle throughout the drama which led up to his anointment (1 Kings 1. 5-49). And, finally, the confident presumption displayed by Adonijah in claiming the hand of Abishag can be explained satisfactorily only by the extreme youthfulness of Solomon. We may thus conjecture that Solomon was sixteen years old at his anointment. Now Solomon was born two years after David's sin with Bath-sheba (cf. 2 Sam. 11. 27 and 12. 15, 24). The sin took place during the siege of Rabbah, or a year after the outbreak of the Ammonite War (cf. 2 Sam. 11. 1 a with H. P. Smith's note in his *Samuel*, 317 f. See also *Kimḥi ad loc.*). Hence Solomon's birth took place three years after the outbreak of the Ammonite War. Assuming that he was sixteen years old at his anointment, then the Ammonite War began nineteen years before Solomon's anointment, or in the year 21 of David's reign, i. e. in the

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *ZATW.*, II, 312-14; III, 185.

same year as, but subsequently to, the Moabite War. This would tend to prove that, unlike the wars against Ammon and Edom (cf. 1 Kings 11. 15-16), the Moabite War was only of a short duration.

We may now set down the order of events in David's foreign wars as follows: First came the Moabite War, and then the great Ammonite—Aramean War. This latter was marked by the following stages: the insult to David's ambassadors; the battle with the combined forces of Ammon and their Aramean mercenaries; the battle at Helam against the Arameans alone (2 Sam. chap. 10); the invasion of Ammon and the siege of Rabbah (11. 1 ff.); the fall of Rabbah (12. 26-31); the invasion of Zobah and Damascus (8. 3 ff.; cf. this REVIEW, *ibid.*, p. 92, § 96); and finally the embassy of To'i (8. 9-10). The last of the foreign wars was the invasion and subjugation of Edom (cf. 8. 13-14 with Driver's note; 1 Kings 11. 15-16; Ps. 60. 2. See also W. Jawitz, תולדות ישראל, II, 167-9).

The last series of events in David's reign are concerned with the history of his family life. Some of these events synchronize with the foreign wars. Thus the sin with Bath-sheba took place during the second year of the Ammonite War. The birth of Bath-sheba's first child came nine months later, and that of Solomon one year after that. The violation of Tamar must have taken place not long after the sin with Bath-sheba. Both the fall of Rabbah and the violation of Tamar probably occurred before the birth of Solomon, though in our narrative they are given later. Two years after the violation of Tamar came the murder of Amnon and the flight of Absalom to Geshur (13. 23 a). Absalom's return came three years later (13. 38), his formal reconciliation with his father two years after his return (14. 28), and four years later his Rebellion (15. 7.



For *שנה ארבעים* we must read with LXX, L and Peshiṭta : *ארבע שנים*). Thus the Rebellion of Absalom took place eleven years after the violation of Tamar. If we assume the latter event to have occurred one year after the sin with Bath-sheba, i. e. in the year 23 of David's reign, then the Rebellion took place in the year 34, i. e. when David was sixty-four years old. This would accord admirably with the physical and mental characteristics displayed by David during the Rebellion. The age of Absalom at his death would thus have been no higher than thirty-two years. For we learn from 3. 2 a, 3 b that Absalom was born from the daughter of the king of Geshur during David's residence at Hebron. Now David could have secured a foreign princess for wife only after his appointment as king over Judah. Thus at the earliest Absalom's birth must have taken place at the end of the second year of David's reign.

The following Chronological Table summarizes the results of our foregoing inquiry. The figures denote the number of years of David's reign :

Anointment of David as king over Judah.		The Famine	15-18
Proclamation of Ishbosheth	1	The Census	20
Birth of Absalom	2	War with Moab	21
Death of Ishbosheth	3	War with Ammon and Aram	21
Anointment of David as king over all Israel	4	Sin with Bath-sheba	22
First Philistine War	5	Violation of Tamar	23
Capture of Jerusalem	7	Fall of Rabbah and Invasion of Zobah and Damascus	24
Removal of royal residence to Jerusalem	7½	Birth of Solomon	24
Alliance with Hiram	8	Murder of Amnon and flight of Absalom	25
Second Philistine War	9	Return of Absalom	28
Bringing up of the Ark to Jerusalem	10	David's Reconciliation with Absalom	30
Nathan's Prophecy	12	Rebellion of Absalom	34
Coming of Mephibosheth to Jerusalem	15	Anointment of Solomon	40
		Death of David.	

NOTE.—The previous Studies of this series appeared in this REVIEW as follows: I, vol. V, pp. 201-231; II, vol. VI, pp. 267-302, 555-587, vol. VIII, pp. 75-100, vol. IX, pp. 43-70; III, vol. X, pp. 203-236.